

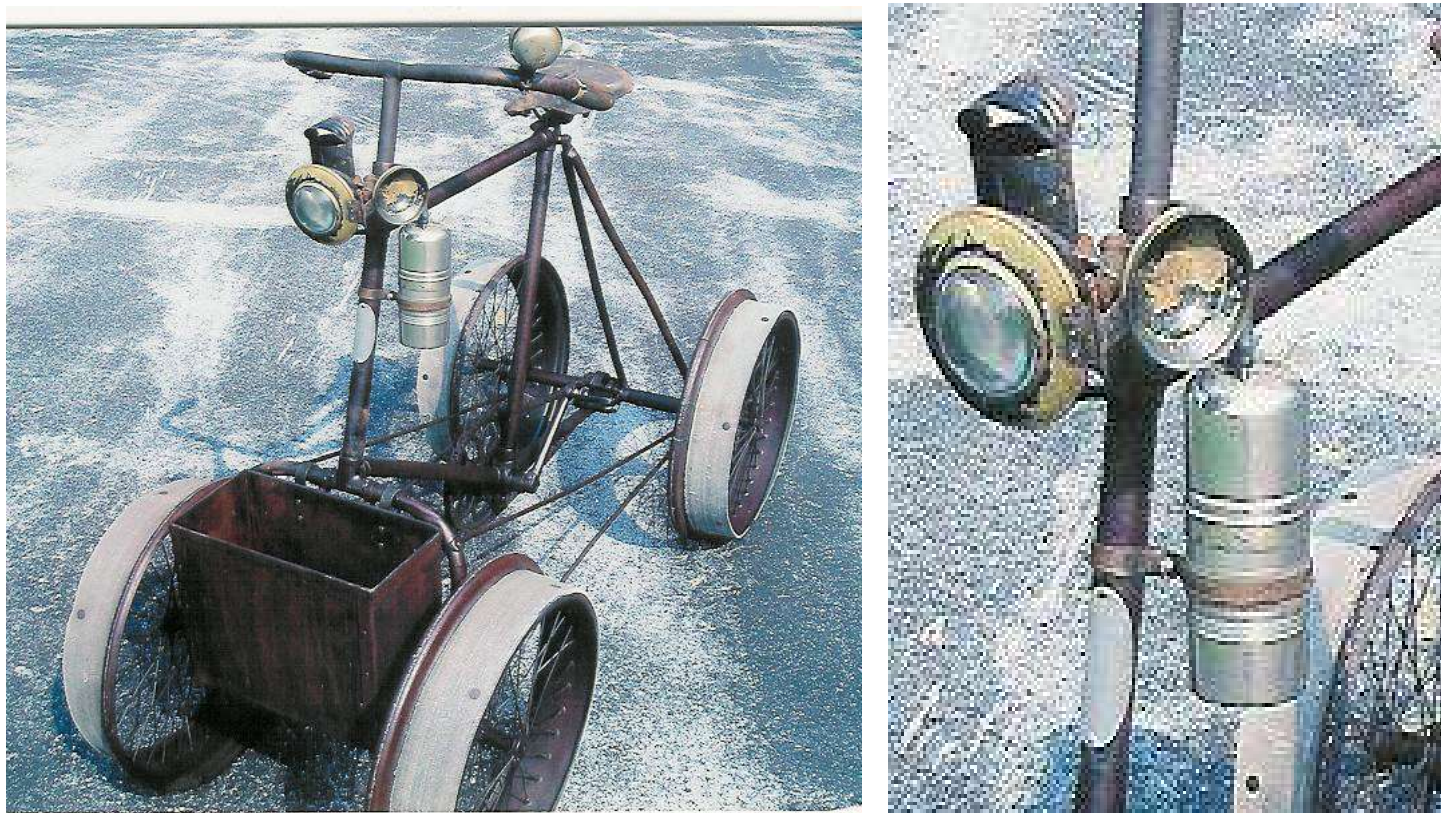
Light Rail Inspection Car

by Deric English

Some collectors might remember the "Miner's Bike" that sold on ebay (item # 6226161113) November 19, 2005 for \$3,383.00. Mel Short of Williamsport, Maryland was the winning bidder and this "Miner's Bike" now rests among another eighty bicycles in his collection. Mel expressed that this particular "Miner's Bike" was actually called a "Light Rail Inspection Car" and was manufactured by the Teetor Company of Hagerstown, Indiana in 1901. He has restored it to its glorious days, when it traversed the mine tracks of a Colorado gold mine, with the addition of a tool box, bell, and illuminating carbide lamp. He also has been kind enough to share some information and pictures, which I hope some of you will enjoy.



As mentioned earlier, this "Miner's Bike" was operated in a Colorado gold mine believed to be somewhere near Cripple Creek up until the 1950s when it was tossed to the scrap heap. A former mine employee noticed it and pulled it from the scrap yard in the 1970s and he then placed it in storage. In 2005 this former mine employee took it to a Colorado antique dealer and it was subsequently auctioned on ebay.



In 1894, while working in a bicycle repair shop, Charles Newton Teetor fabricated a prototype of his railway cycle with thin-wall tubular framing, chain and sprocket drive, paper thin metal, and wire spoke wheels with rubber tread. In 1895 he obtained a patent for his railway cycle and the single seat version weighed only sixty pounds.

Charles, along with his father and four brothers, went on to establish Light Inspection Car Works--Hagerstown, Indiana in 1894 or 1895. This led to the creation of a profitable business and in 1909 was reorganized as the Teetor, Hartley Motor Company. This company produced gasoline inspection cars and was perhaps best known for its production of piston rings under the trade name of "Perfect Circle Company." Some of you gear heads and hot rodders of the 1950s might recall this company.

